Impact of Destination Branding Aspects Including Brand Identity, Brand Positioning, and Brand Communication on Customer Acquisition in the Tourism Industry: The Context of Jiangxi China

Shu Shi[1][2], Rosidah Binti Musa[3]

[1]City Graduate School, City University, Malaysia, [2]Jiangxi Polytechnic University, China, [3]City Graduate School, City University, Malaysia

Email: realss@foxmail.com, rosidah.musa@city.edu.my

Abstract

Problem: Using a correlational research design, a positivist research ethic, and a quantitative research approach, the study looks into the relationships between destination branding components and customer acquisition. Data is obtained using a survey study technique, with standardized questionnaires sent to Jiangxi tourists. **Research objective:** Examine the effects of destination branding on customer acquisition in Jiangxi's tourist industry to assist in developing efficient marketing strategies. This study investigates the complex relationship between destination branding and client acquisition in Jiangxi, China's tourism business. The study investigates how brand identity, positioning, and communication influence the appeal of potential tourists. **Methodology:** The research advocates for the development of a distinct and authentic brand identity and positioning in Jiangxi's tourism industry to promote economic growth, job creation, and overall success. The study provides valuable insights for destination marketers by emphasizing the role of brand identity and positioning in affecting consumer perceptions, values, and loyalty. The conclusion underlines the value of destination branding as a strategy for increasing customer acquisition and ensuring the long-term viability of Jiangxi's tourism industry. **Key findings:** The main findings highlight the need for a strong brand identity that highlights Jiangxi's natural beauty, history, and culture in attracting and maintaining tourists. Brand positioning has evolved into an important strategic component that combines visitor expectations with actual experiences, emphasizing environmentally responsible activities and cultural diversity. According to the poll, having a clear brand identity and strategic positioning helps businesses stand out in a competitive market by developing emotional connections, establishing trust, and recruiting new customers.

Introduction

This study emphasizes how important destination branding is to the travel and tourism sector, especially when considering Jiangxi, China. The results show how important it is to have a strong brand identity, strategic positioning, and efficient brand communication to draw in and acquire tourists. The capacity of travel locations like Jiangxi to distinguish and provide distinctive experiences is crucial to their success as the global tourism landscape becomes more competitive (Khan et al., 2022). Moreover, the research underscores the significance of client acquisition tactics within the wider framework of business expansion, stressing the function of marketing, customer interaction, and providing outstanding products and services. For players in the tourist sector and companies looking to prosper in this ever-changing market, these insights provide insightful advice.

In the tech-savvy world of today, a strong online presence and digital marketing techniques are critical components of destination branding in the travel and tourist sector. By utilizing social media, search engine optimization, and the development of captivating content, tourist companies may expand their reach and cultivate a favourable online image. The fluidity of consumer choices, particularly in the aftermath of the pandemic, highlights the importance of destination branding elements such as brand identity, positioning, and communication in shaping the process of attracting new customers. Jiangxi's natural resources and culture make it a great base for branding, while infrastructural and emotional appeal investments make it even more appealing (Hultman et al., 2017). In addition to encouraging identification, a clearly defined brand identity also builds credibility and trust two qualities that are essential for attracting new customers and standing out in a crowded market. The province has a variety of attractions, but it struggles to stand out from the competition due to a lack of a consistent branding strategy that would convey its special qualities to prospective visitors (Li et al., 2021). Reaching and interacting with clients via digital media is still difficult. Customer acquisition efforts are complicated by the lack of detailed data about the impact of branding aspects on customer behaviour and preferences. Insufficient coordination among many stakeholders results in disjointed marketing approaches.

In the tourist sector, attracting new customers is essential to profitability, economic expansion, and sustainability. Branding, marketing, promotions, consumer interaction, and distribution methods are all included in strategies. These initiatives are guided by market research and segmentation, which aids companies in matching target markets. A distinctive identity and captivating story combined with effective destination branding distinguish destinations from rivals. Both conventional and digital methods are used in marketing. Effective destination branding and marketing tactics are essential in Jiangxi's tourist industry, particularly in the post-COVID-19 environment. The tourist business worldwide is a complex sector with wide-ranging effects. It acts as a major economic engine, creating jobs and boosting regional economies with the money that foreign visitors spend. Furthermore, by introducing tourists to other cultures and customs, tourism promotes cross-cultural understanding and world peace (Shankar et al., 2022). But the growth of the sector also brings with it environmental and social problems, such as the need for better infrastructure and the handling of trash and congestion in well-known locations. Essentially, tourism is a dynamic

and intricate industry that influences many facets of our globalized world by fusing economic, cultural, environmental, and social components.

Strict restrictions impacting recovery have further damaged the Chinese tourism industry as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. The worldwide movement for eco-friendliness in the tourist industry complicates the industry's comeback. In order to respond to contemporary issues, it is essential to comprehend how branding elements such as brand identity, positioning, and communication interact (Xu et al., 2021). Understanding the importance of brand identity in attracting new customers is essential for developing winning tactics, figuring out what appeals to them, and swaying their choices.

The influence of destination branding on Jiangxi, China's tourist industry is the main topic of this study. It examines how consumer attractiveness is impacted by branding techniques, highlighting the components that contribute to distinction and identity development. The study examines traditional and digital marketing strategies and evaluates how successful they are in attracting new clients. Jiangxi, the geographical scope of this inquiry, is renowned for its natural beauty and historical value (Li, 2021). It draws tourists from both domestic and international locations with its landscapes, cultural treasures, and historical monuments. The study adds to the body of knowledge on destination branding and customer acquisition for academics, and policymakers may utilize the data to develop evidence-based plans to boost Jiangxi's competitiveness as a travel destination, which would eventually spur economic expansion and employment creation.

Literature Review

In Jiangxi, China, destination branding entails developing a distinct identity highlighting the region's natural, historical, and cultural diversity (Lamrhari et al., 2022). One step in this strategy is brand positioning, which presents Jiangxi as a calm, energetic, and environmentally responsible travel destination. Ads, social media, and content marketing are just a few of the strategies that should be used to effectively communicate the province's unique qualities and dedication to high-quality experiences. One of the most important strategic processes for growing a business's clientele is customer acquisition, which combines engagement, sales, and marketing strategies. Crucial elements in this approach include determining the target market and picking suitable offline and online marketing platforms (Rahimi et al., 2018). Jiangxi's booming tourist sector demonstrates the complex interaction between marketing strategies and recruiting new consumers. It also highlights the interplay between destination branding and client acquisition.

The success of Jiangxi's destination branding depends on having a clear brand identity that captures the region's natural, cultural, and historical charm. More than simply a logo, this design inspires amazement and confidence in prospective travellers by forging an emotional bond. It sets expectations for guests and serves as a promise (Coelho et al., 2018). It also has to be in line with the region's attempts to be genuine and sustainable. Travellers seeking natural beauty and cultural immersion will choose Jiangxi as their destination because it meets their expectations, which encourages positive word-of-mouth and improves client acquisition. This is why consistency between the brand identity and real experiences is so important (Bilgin, 2020).

Strong brand identities encourage good word-of-mouth and return visits by acting as a link between a destination's history, present, and future in addition to drawing tourists (Strandberg, Styvén & Hultman, 2020). A destination's brand identity is essential to drawing visitors since it evokes particular feelings and fits with their interests and objectives. It distinguishes the location from rivals by appealing to a variety of visitor demographics.

In destination marketing, brand positioning entails purposefully influencing prospective tourists' perceptions of a place like Jiangxi (Yang et al., 2022). It presents a clear and favourable picture by emphasizing the region's distinctive cultural diversity and environmentally responsible tourist methods. Maintaining uniformity in promotional materials and guest experiences is essential for fostering confidence and coordinating expectations. Good placement shapes traveller choices, busts myths, and draws in travelers looking for certain environmental and cultural experiences (Cooper, 2021). It's a calculated move that will define the core of the destination, forge a distinctive brand that makes a splash in a crowded market, direct all marketing initiatives, and guarantee clarity and coherence.

In destination marketing, brand positioning is developing a unique identity that appeals to the target consumer, like in the case of Jiangxi. It emphasizes distinctive value propositions, standing out from rivals, and catering to audience preferences. Good placement clears the air, dispels misconceptions, and synchronizes visitor expectations with real experiences (Donnelly, 2023). By increasing brand image alignment with visitor expectations, Jiangxi's positioning which highlights cultural richness and eco-friendly practices attracts travelers looking for immersive and unique experiences, hence promoting client acquisition.

Through the creation of unique market positions, the development of emotional connections, the maintenance of consistency across touchpoints, and the promotion of good word-of-mouth, brand positioning has a substantial influence on client acquisition. Credibility and trust are increased, which promotes advocacy and client loyalty (Quaye et al., 2022). A steady online presence improves brand placement in the digital era and draws in more customers. Businesses may improve client acquisition and overall performance by standing out, engaging the appropriate clients, and successfully communicating distinct value propositions through strategic brand positioning. Positive views, trust, and emotional connections are fostered by brand positioning, which has a significant impact on customer acquisition. In order to draw in and keep customers, a strong value offer exposes advantages over rivals and attends to consumer demands (Haralayya, 2021). Building trust via consistent positioning encourages recommendations and repeat business.

Although prior research has yielded significant insights, issues remain about how to best utilize communication channels in concert, adjust positioning in response to shifting preferences and cultural quirks, and include ethical precepts. Jiangxi's consistent, culturally diverse, and eco-friendly brand positioning draws tourists, thus boosting attempts to increase customer acquisition (Wiedmann et al., 2018). Jiangxi's brand marketing is essential to drawing tourists since it communicates the region's distinctive historical, cultural, and natural features. It arouses feelings and creates an emotional connection using techniques like storytelling, social media, and advertising, encouraging prospective travellers to picture themselves at the location (Zollo et al., 2020). Authentic, open communication that is in line with the region's positioning and identity fosters trust. With a focus on sustainability and

cultural immersion, interacting with visitors on social media and through interactive content deepens the relationship, improves customer acquisition, and leaves a lasting impression (Arya et al., 2022).

In Jiangxi, brand marketing plays a crucial role in building awareness and trust between prospective tourists and the region's distinctive attractions. By employing diverse platforms like social media and narrative, it cultivates a sentimental bond and prioritizes openness, according to the destination's essence. Brand awareness and consumer engagement are improved by integrated marketing strategies, two-way communication, and consistency. Travellers are inspired to anticipate immersive and sustainable experiences by brand marketing that highlights Jiangxi's eco-friendly practices and rich cultural heritage. This eventually leads to an increase in customer acquisition.

Understanding the complex interactions between brand identity, brand positioning, and brand communication is crucial when it comes to destination branding, especially when considering Jiangxi, China. The natural beauty and rich cultural legacy of Jiangxi offer a distinctive backdrop for developing a captivating brand identity that prioritizes social and environmental responsibility (Mohajan, 2020). This brand needs to convey a dedication to sustainability, arouse good feelings, and build trust. The brand's identity is shaped by sustainable practices, community participation, and eco-friendly efforts, which in turn influence customers' expectations for experiences related to responsible tourism.

A key factor in marketing the place as a socially and ecologically conscious tourism option is brand positioning. Ensuring uniformity among diverse touchpoints guarantees that travellers' anticipations align with their factual encounters (Chen et al., 2020). Since they close the gap between the projected and actual sustainability activities, transparency and honesty in brand communication are critical to customer satisfaction and favourable word-of-mouth. Customized communication is essential in Jiangxi's varied tourist scene as different market groups value different sustainable practices. Delivering experiences in line with Jiangxi's sustainable brand positioning, identity, and communication strategies is critical to the sector's success (Farooq et al., 2022). Jiangxi can guarantee long-term client acquisition and cultivate a strong reputation as an ethical vacation destination by upholding the integrity of its sustainability pledges and continuously surpassing visitor expectations.

The interaction of psychological theories with destination branding has a significant impact on the tourist industry's customer acquisition strategy. Attachment Theory emphasizes consistency and pleasant experiences in order to highlight the emotional connection that prospective visitors want with a location (Rather, 2020). The production of transforming and unforgettable experiences is emphasised by experiences theory, consistent with branding claims to improve consumer happiness and word-of-mouth referrals. In order to create a sense of community and belonging, Identification Theory explores social identity and focuses on matching the destination brand with travellers' self-concept and social objectives (Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019). In order to improve reputation and trust, the Corporate Branding Model places a strong emphasis on stakeholder interaction, consistency, and strategic brand positioning. By putting these ideas into practice, destination marketers are able to craft engaging stories, one-of-a-kind experiences, and unified brand strategies that successfully attract clients and foster enduring loyalty.

Methodology

The main focuses of this study's research technique include population and sampling, data collecting, research design, research philosophy, research approach, research strategy, participant testing guide, and anticipation guide. These elements play a crucial role in helping the researcher navigate the process of examining the connection between Jiangxi, China-specific destination branding and acquiring customers in the tourist sector.

The research design used in the study is correlational, which looks at correlations between variables without altering them. Without changing these factors, this method is appropriate for investigating the relationships between destination branding aspects and customer acquisition. Without changing these factors, the correlational research approach selected for this study enables the investigation of correlations between destination branding elements such as brand positioning, brand identity, and brand communication and client acquisition (Zhao et al., 2022). This method provides a thorough grasp of the relationships between these components, allowing for a perceptive awareness of the dynamics of customer acquisition in the travel and tourism sector as well as in-depth analysis.

The chosen research philosophy is positivism, which places a strong emphasis on empirical observation, measurability, and objectivity. In order to test theories and derive objective findings regarding the correlations between variables, positivist researchers utilise quantitative data, statistical analysis, and experimentation. The present study employs positivism as its research philosophy, prioritising objectivity, measurability, and empirical observation (Mustofa et al., 2023). In positivism, theories are assessed and objective conclusions about causal relationships are reached through the use of experiments, statistical analysis, and quantitative data. This philosophical approach ensures a methodical and evidence-based investigation of destination branding components and their influence on client acquisition in the tourist industry, hence improving the rigour and reliability of the study findings.

The study uses a quantitative research technique, which involves gathering and analysing numerical data in order to investigate relationships between variables, test hypotheses, and draw statistical conclusions. Rigid statistical analysis made possible by quantitative research yields objective, broadly applicable results. For this study, a quantitative research technique was selected, involving the methodical gathering and examination of numerical data (Mohajan, 2020). The study investigates variable correlations, examines hypotheses, and draws statistical conclusions on destination branding features and their impact on attracting customers in the tourist business by concentrating on quantitative methodologies. This methodology facilitates meticulous statistical examination, guaranteeing impartial and broadly applicable outcomes that augment a comprehensive comprehension of the investigated subject.

A survey research strategy is used, which entails employing standardised questionnaires to collect data from a pre-selected population methodically. Surveys provide a variety of elements of human nature, including attitudes, interests, and behaviour. Because of the study's emphasis on the Jiangxi, China, tourism sector, views and perceptions of travellers to certain locations must be gathered. This study used a survey research strategy, which uses standardised questionnaires to collect data from a pre-selected group methodically (Andreoli

et al., 2023). Surveys are flexible instruments that provide information about various human behaviours, attitudes, and preferences. Considering the study's emphasis on Jiangxi, China's tourism sector, gathering views and insights from travellers to certain locations in the area is crucial. Surveys offer a methodical way to gather important data, making it possible to analyse destination branding components in-depth and how they affect the acquisition of customers within a given environment.

Data Collection
Surveys will be used to gather primary data from visitors at three designated locations in Jiangxi, China. The survey's questions are thoughtfully crafted to guarantee neutrality, relevance, and clarity. The study will employ several sampling strategies, such as simple random sampling, to identify representative individuals from the intended demographic. Surveys will be used to gather primary data for this project from visitors to three designated locations in Jiangxi, China (Liang et al., 2022). In order to guarantee impartiality, relevance, and clarity, the survey questionnaire has been painstakingly created, enabling accurate data collecting. Simple random sampling is one of the sampling strategies that will be used to guarantee the representativeness of the sample. These techniques will make it possible to choose participants from the target demographic, offering insightful information on how travellers view and interact with destination branding components and customer acquisition in the Jiangxi tourism sector.

The population under investigation consists of travellers to Jiangxi, China. Slovin's algorithm is used to calculate the sample size of 285 respondents, guaranteeing a representative subset for the study. While exclusion criteria keep out those who work at these locations or are otherwise part of the community, inclusion criteria are designed to include visitors to the specified locations.

True/false statements in anticipation guides are intended to pique participants' interest and encourage critical thought. Before beginning the survey, participants are encouraged to think about important ideas associated with destination branding by using these instructions as cognitive springboards. In order to facilitate more meaningful interaction with the survey questions, the anticipation guide assists participants in reflecting on their prior knowledge and opinions. A research study's methodology part is essential since it describes the methodical procedures used to gather and examine data, guaranteeing the validity and reliability of the study (Coleman, 2022). Within the framework of the study "Aspects of Destination Branding's Impact on Tourists' Acquisition of New Customers: The Context of Jiangxi, China," an extensive approach has been created to successfully meet the study's objectives. The main elements of this methodology are covered in the sections that follow.
Using a quantitative research approach, the study examines how destination branding elements, brand identity, brand positioning, and brand communication, affect travel sector client acquisition. Participants' responses to a standardised survey questionnaire are used to collect data, enabling an organised reliable method of information gathering.

Instrumentation
The main tool used for gathering data is a survey questionnaire. The structured questions in the questionnaire are specifically designed to target different research factors and demographic data (Enria et al., 2021). The design of the questionnaire makes sure that

pertinent information is gathered in order to meet the objectives of the study. The web tool Google Forms is chosen to host and distribute the survey since it offers efficiency and convenience in gathering data.

Data Collection Process
The online survey is made, hosted on Google Forms, and split into parts that address various aspects of destination branding. There's a thorough pretesting procedure before the real survey. In order to identify and fix issues with question phrasing, clarity, and platform functionality, a small sample will participate in a pilot test (Braun et al., 2021). Respondents obtain the survey via an assigned URL or a dedicated landing page, and their answers are automatically captured and safely archived for examination.

Data Analysis
Thorough inspection, cleansing, and interpretation of the gathered data are all part of data analysis. The primary features of the data, such as averages, standard deviations, and minimum and maximum values, are first revealed via descriptive analysis. Based on the sample data, inferential analysis, which includes regression analysis and hypothesis testing, allows researchers to make inferences about the population (Kelter, 2020). With the aid of SPSS statistical software, correlation analysis evaluates the relationship between variables and offers important insights into how they are related to one another.

Throughout the entire research process, ethical issues are carefully taken into account. Participants provide their informed consent, guaranteeing that they are aware of the goals, methods, risks, and advantages of the study. Participant confidentiality and privacy are protected by meticulous data processing, storage, and anonymization procedures (Schoot & Miocević, 2020). Ethical standards are further maintained by providing essential authorization and clear disclosure regarding data usage and sharing.

The credibility of the research is largely dependent on its validity and dependability. By confirming that the questionnaire fully captures each element of the constructs being studied, content validity is guaranteed. Expert reviews are crucial for spotting and fixing potential problems and guaranteeing the instrument's quality, applicability, and cultural sensitivity (Critchley et al., 2020). Pretesting, which includes pilot testing, improves the accuracy, comprehensibility, and clarity of the questionnaire even more.

Results
The thematic analysis demonstrates how important brand positioning and identity are in affecting Jiangxi's tourism industry's customer acquisition process. The cornerstone is the brand identity, which encapsulates the historical, cultural, and scenic splendour of the region. It fosters an emotional connection and trust, two things that are essential for attracting and retaining customers. Moreover, Jiangxi has strategically positioned its brand to create a unique identity. It highlights the area's distinctive value offerings, including eco-friendly pursuits and cultural variety. Good brand positioning attracts travellers seeking unique and engaging experiences, which elevates visitor expectations and makes customer acquisition easier.

These findings demonstrate how a place with a strong brand identity—one that is characterized by consistency, emotional resonance, and authenticity—may stand out in a competitive market. It attracts new clients, cultivates client loyalty, and encourages recommendations from word-of-mouth. Effective brand positioning further boosts client acquisition by aligning the company image with the expectations of travellers by offering value and striking a chord with them.

Overall, the study demonstrated how brand identity and positioning create consumer perceptions, values, and loyalty, which in turn impacts the acquisition process, and underlined the link between Jiangxi destination branding and customer acquisition. These findings provide Jiangxi destination marketers and those in adjacent fields with incisive guidance that will enhance their attempts to build their brands and increase customer acquisition.

Discussion
The main focus of this study is how Jiangxi, China's tourist industry's customer acquisition process is affected by destination branding, particularly brand identity. By focusing on important facets of brand identity, positioning, and communication as well as customer segmentation and perceptions, the four study objectives support this subject.

Li (2021), explored how perceived value among visitors affected brand loyalty, highlighting how important it is to provide value for tourists a factor that has a close connection to brand identity. A destination's unique qualities and values are reflected in its brand identity, which increases perceived value and, in turn, fosters brand loyalty. By emphasising the importance of brand identity in influencing consumer impressions and acquisition, this study is in line with the objectives.

A framework for quantitative analysis and differentiated marketing of tourism destination images based on visual content was provided by (Xiao et al., 2022). The research emphasises how important visual components are to destination branding, which is a subset of brand communication. Visual content that effectively communicates a brand can impact tourists' perceptions of a destination and, in turn, their likelihood of making a purchase.

The overall objective of the study is to investigate how Jiangxi's tourist industry uses destination branding, which includes brand identification, positioning, and communication, to attract new customers. In accordance with the overarching topic of how brand identity affects client acquisition by forming perceptions, values, and loyalty, they also take into account the effects of customer segmentation and perceptions.

Understanding how a destination's brand positioning affects customer acquisition in Jiangxi's tourist sector is the main theme of this study. The study objectives that look into brand identity, brand positioning, and brand communication and how these factors affect consumer acquisition address this theme. The analysis in this context will mainly concentrate on how brand positioning affects customer acquisition.

A framework for quantitative analysis and targeted marketing of tourism destination photos based on visual content is presented by (Xiao et al., 2022). This paradigm emphasises how important visual components are to destination branding, which is a key component of brand

positioning. Well-crafted visual content has the power to reshape a destination's positioning, impacting client acquisition by influencing how prospective visitors see it.

Li (2021), explored how travellers' perceptions of a company's worth affect their brand loyalty, which is directly related to brand positioning. The production of value for tourists is emphasised in the study, which is an essential component of brand positioning. This study demonstrates how a clearly defined brand positioning that appeals to tourists and provides value may foster brand loyalty, which in turn can impact customer acquisition.

Conclusion

Therefore, it can be said that this study examines the intricate relationship that exists between destination branding and client attraction in Jiangxi, China's tourist industry. The study's main focus is on how elements of destination branding, such as brand identity and positioning, impact the process of attracting potential clients. The study provides valuable insights into the customer acquisition dynamics within Jiangxi's tourist sector through an in-depth analysis of consumer segmentation and perceptions, brand positioning, identity, and communication.

The findings demonstrate how crucial brand identity is to attracting and retaining tourists. A distinctive brand identity that emphasizes Jiangxi's great natural beauty, history, and culture forms the cornerstone of destination branding. It forges sincere connections, builds confidence, and forges emotional bonds with possible visitors. Because of Jiangxi's emotional resonance, tourists are enticed to visit and are even encouraged to make it their destination of choice.

Brand positioning is a critical strategic element in the client acquisition process. Effective brand positioning matches tourist expectations with real experiences by precisely describing and showcasing the region's distinctive value propositions, such as its eco-friendly activities and cultural richness. This methodical approach not only draws in guests searching for interesting and different experiences, but it also eliminates any confusion, guaranteeing a pleasant stay.

The theme analysis further demonstrates the need of a strong brand identity and well created positioning in Jiangxi's tourist industry. When combined, these factors help the area stand out in a congested market. By establishing a strong emotional connection, building trust, and making a clear guarantee of value to travellers, they make it easier to acquire new clients. Furthermore, when a company's positioning is in line with the values of its target market, it promotes brand loyalty and strengthens the beneficial word-of-mouth effect.

Therefore, this study provides the critical roles that brand identity and positioning play in influencing consumer perceptions, values, and loyalty. These observations offer insightful advice to destination marketers in Jiangxi and related areas, helping them to improve their branding and increase customer acquisition. The findings highlight how crucial it is to develop a distinctive and genuine brand identity and positioning that appeals to the needs of the target audience in order to encourage economic growth, create jobs, and support a healthy tourism sector in the area. The study comes to the conclusion that destination branding is an effective strategy for increasing client acquisition and, thus, ensuring Jiangxi's tourist industry continues to succeed.

Acknowledgement

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